The Tribune, Scranton, Pa. Wed., Dec. 29, 1982—3

# Contract Due for New Post Office In Carbondale; Necessity Disputed

By JOHN M. HART JR.

Despite complaints registered by several Carbondale residents, the U.S. Postal Service is continuing with a plan to construct a new post office in the Pioneer City and it was learned Tuesday a construction contract could be awarded in the next three weeks.

The Postal Service has been attempting to construct a new facility in Carbondale for many years and purchased land on Dundaff Street a few years ago with that end result in mind.

Ever since news of a new facility surfaced, several residents asked why the present building, in service for some 50 years and centrally located on North Main Street, couldn't be renovated and retained.

Gerald P. Barrett, Carbondale's postmaster, said many of those making complaints were concerned over the new site – located one block off Main Street – and believe it will be difficult for walk-in service.

Barrett explained Tuesday the present facility is not functional for the amount of mail handled today. And he said it would not be cost efficient to renovate the aged structure.

The new structure, to consist of a large mail processing room, postmaster's office, self-service and full service window, is scheduled for construction sometime in 1983.

A total of 11 bids were opened in Barrett's office Nov. 23rd. The postmaster said the Postal Service was hoping to have the facility constructed for about $450,000 but the bids ranged from a low of approximately $520,000 to a high of over $600,000.

It was learned Tuesday that a spokesman for the Postal Service's regional office in Philadelphia revealed the bids are still under review and an award could come within the next three weeks.

As for the present operation in Carbondale – a 11,828 square-foot, two story building with parking for 30 cars – Barrett claims the federal, state and county governments have declined on an offer to purchase and the city government was offered the building about one month ago.

But Barrett's remarks came as a surprise to City Councilman James McMyne who claimed the offer was news to him.

McMyne said the post office building would be an "ideal" municipal building for Carbondale but questioned where the financially-starved community would get the money to purchase and renovate the building.

The veteran councilman said he believes it would cost about $25,000 to renovate the open first floor into offices but added he understands the basemen would give the city polic department a much bett holding (jail) area. "If t.. city had the money, it would be ideal," he said.

Joseph Masco, the city's business administrator, said the Postal Service asked the city if it was interested in purchasing the structure and the city responded in the affirmative.

Masco said Mayor Fred J. Mancuso sent a letter to the Postal Service requesting additional information on the building and the administration was awaiting a reply.

Masco would not speculate on what use the city would have for the structure. He said he could not understand McMyne's surprise at hearing of the proposal since he read the original missive from the Postal Service at a Council session last October.